

at least one access device for enabling users to communicate with the computer system and access any of the items of available information;

means for storing a user profile for each user having access to the available items of information;

means for ranking the likely degree of interest for each of the available items of information in accordance with a user profile, on the basis of correlation with indications of interest provided by other users;

means for presenting the items of information to an access device in order of ranking and enabling a user to retrieve each item;

means for enabling the user to indicate that user's interest in each retrieved item of information; and

means for updating the user's profile in response to indications of interest provided by the user.

Please add the following new claims 28-39.

17. -28. The information access system of claim ¹⁵8, wherein said ranking means utilizes a spreading activation technique to rank the items of information.

Q2 18. 29. The information access system of claim ¹⁵8, wherein said ranking means produces a formula which predicts the interest of a user in an item of information on the basis of at least one of a collection of votes of other users relating to that item of information, a user profile and an attribute related to that item of information.

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¹⁹/₃₀ The information access system of claim ¹⁸/₂₉, wherein said formula is based on all three of said collection of votes, user profile and attribute.

²⁰/₃₁ The information access system of claim ¹⁸/₂₉, wherein said formula is produced by means of genetic algorithms.

Q2 ²¹/₃₂ The information access system of claim ¹⁸/₂₉, wherein said formula is computed in accordance with genetic programming.

²²/₃₃ The information access system of claim ¹⁵/₈, wherein a vector is determined for each item of information and for each user profile, and the ranking of an item of information is based on the similarity of its vector with the vector profile for a given user.

²⁴/₃₄ A method for providing information to users of a computer system, comprising the steps of:

- storing items of information in an unstructured database within the computer system;
- determining and storing user profiles for users of the computer system who have access to the items of information;
- receiving a request from a user for access to the stored information;

determining the user's likely degree of interest in items of information stored in said database, in accordance with that user's profile, by establishing the correlation between indications provided by a given user and those provided by other users, and determining a prediction value for the item of information based upon said correlation and the other users' indications for that item of information;

B.
A2
ranking the ^{*information*} ~~items of interest~~ in accordance with their determined degrees of interest; and

displaying the items of information with an indication of their relative rankings.

B.
35.
34 ^{*items of information*} ~~34~~ The method of claim ~~34~~ wherein said ~~messages~~ are displayed in order of their ranking.

36.
36. The method of claim ^{*34*} ~~34~~ further including the steps of selecting an item of information from those which are displayed, providing an indication of the user's actual interest in the selected item of information, and storing the user's indicated interest.

37.
37. The method of claim ^{*34*} ~~34~~ wherein said prediction value is further based upon an attribute associated with the item of information.

38.
38. The method of claim ^{*37*} ~~37~~ wherein said item of information is the contents of said item of information.